

Sylvia of the Minute

By Helen R. Martin

STORY FROM THE START

Handsome, fastidious and wealthy—young St. Croix Creighton awaits his sweetheart at their trysting place. She is late, this ordinary little Pennsylvania Dutch girl, Meely Schwenckton. Despite her seeming innocence and ignorance, she succeeds in keeping him at a distance, to his chagrin. Meely, in the Schwenckton home, where she is boarding, is altogether unlike the girl who meets St. Croix clandestinely. She is the teacher in the neighborhood school, of which Marvin Creighton, St. Croix' brother, is superintendent. Meely learns that Marvin was to have married his cousin, a titled English lady, but, believing she was attracted by the Creighton wealth, had refused the alliance. It is the rumor that St. Croix is to take Marvin's place and marry the English girl. St. Croix' jealousy is aroused by Meely's report of an aged suitor for her hand. The girl cleverly deceives him into admitting he has no intention of marrying her. Marvin visits Creighton in his official capacity as superintendent and discovers how shockingly little Meely knows about school teaching. Mr. Schwenckton, coming home from town, picks up a stranger, and finding his watch gone, demands the stranger get out and turns over his watch.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

"I've been held up on the road and robbed!" he announced, his voice weak with fatigue. "May I use your phone to report to the police?"

A stunned silence on the part of the four occupants of the kitchen met this statement and request—Meely staring with wide-open eyes, her hand pressed to her fast-beating heart; Nettie's face going first red, then pale; Mr. Schwenckton trembling and pallid; Susie unmoved.

But it was Susie who broke their stupid silence. "So you see, Sam, he ain't still runnin'?"

A little hysterical squeal of laughter from Meely brought the young man's eyes around to where she stood by the table—clad in a kimono, her hair down her back in a braid. She was glad she was not dressed normally, for in her tailored school suit with her hair done up around her head, she was so transformed from the country bumpkin of her volute frock trimmed with artificial flowers and streaming ribbons that the extreme contrast would have betrayed her hopelessly as a masquerader.

For the man leaning exhausted against the kitchen door was St. Croix Creighton.

"How did you get here so soon?" quavered Mr. Schwenckton, too absorbed in his own quandary to see the flash of startled recognition with which his visitor's eyes met Meely's. She had succeeded, at an instant's notice, in assuming the look of bovine dullness which had so effectually disguised her ever since she had known him.

"Am I—is this Sam Schwenckton's farm?" exclaimed the amazed young man. "I'd no idea where I was, the road's so pitch dark! I've been groping my way for a half hour to find a house where I could telephone. That," pointing to the lamp, "was the first light I saw in five miles!"

"No, not five—not more'n two," Mr. Schwenckton's shaking voice corrected him.

"How do you know? Is this Mr. Schwenckton?" asked St. Croix, for the farmer, without his coat and hat and necktie, did not suggest to him his automobile companion of an hour ago.

"It is," Mr. Schwenckton heavily admitted. "And you, now that I see you in the light, I reckonize as the younger Mr. Creighton! Yl, yl, yl, yl!"

"Yes, I am in a mess!" responded St. Croix, interpreting the farmer's exclamation as an expression of sympathy for his plight. "May I use your—"

"If it's only your watch you want, it ain't no need to phone. Here it is!" Mr. Schwenckton, with shame, averted face, held it out to its owner.

St. Croix, amazed, took it. "You caught the thief? But how? Do tell me! I never was more taken in! He seemed the most harmless, kindly old simpleton—"

This time it was Nettie who gave a little hysterical squeal which brought the young man's eyes, for an instant, to her rosy, eager face.

"Meely!" Mr. Schwenckton appealed, "you tell him how it was! Me, I couldn't get the words together for to explain such a bewilderment!" Meely was appalled. The Schwencktons were accustomed to hear her speak good English; St. Croix had of course never heard her talk anything but the Pennsylvania Dutch dialect!

"Nettie," she murmured, "you tell him!"

Nettie, shy, but all too willing to hold the young god's attention upon

herself, eagerly assumed the task of explaining her poor father's unfortunate mistake—and before she was half through her narrative, they were all laughing except Susie; and even she was feebly smiling.

"What gets me perplexed," said Mr. Schwenckton amazedly, "is that me and you, Mr. Creighton, neighbors since you was born a'ready, though five miles apart and not seeing each other often (I ain't really laid eyes on you since you was a college boy, except to pass each other in our cars)—but that us we could ride together near eight miles yet and not reckonize each other—"

"I'd have known you in your farm clothes, I suppose, but—"

He did not explain how unnatural and unlike himself the farmer looked



"I've Been Held Up on the Road and Robbed," He Announced, His Voice Weak With Fatigue.

to him in his "store suit" with a collar and necktie on.

"It's a good thing we're neighbors that know each other or this here thing mightn't look so funny, but very serious!" Mr. Schwenckton gravely opined.

"I didn't know," St. Croix said suddenly, when Mr. Schwenckton's abject apologies had been accepted, "that you had three daughters, Mr. Schwenckton; I thought you had only two."

"You thought right—I got only two."

"Oh," St. Croix nodded, "then this young lady isn't your daughter?" His nod indicated Nettie, but as she and Meely were standing together, Mr. Schwenckton misunderstood him.

"No, she's only a distant cousin, come to school to teach here."

"Teach? Why, she looks too young! You can't tell, these days, can you, how old girls are?"

Meely realized that his look of amazement, almost of consternation, was not at all for Nettie's youth as a teacher, but for the awful English with which the children of the district must be instructed!

Nettie was delighted that no one but herself, as she supposed, perceived his mistake, for it was wonderful to have Mr. St. Croix Creighton think her old enough and "smart" enough to be a school teacher! Thankful she was indeed that Meely didn't speak in and claim the honor.

It was obvious to Meely that St. Croix was even more concerned than she was that neither he nor she should by look or word reveal to this family the relation in which they stood.

Mr. Schwenckton offered, now, to get out his car again and take Mr. Creighton home, but the young man

In Splendor, Venice Surpassed All Cities

In Venice of the Sixteenth century luxury and splendor surpassed all bounds; never before at any time nor in any city were religious ceremonies, victories, the conclusion of peace, the visits of foreigners, or the marriages of illustrious persons, celebrated with greater pomp and magnificence. Those in the occupations of cloth makers and drapers reaped huge fortunes, for on nearly every gala occasion miles of rich new fabric were used and visitors to the city were rendered speechless by the matchless spectacle. There was a great rivalry among the nobles to see who could appear in the processions in the most expensive robe of gold and velvet, while the richness and the hangings from balcony and

carpets spread for the feet of the hour's hero strove to make themselves seen among the profusion of flowers, the countless flashing candles and the play of color. When some magnificent occasion of this sort was not in progress Venice was not permitted to be dull for a moment—there was always some carnival of merry-makers on the streets and masquerades were so common they became a nuisance and met with decrees forbidding them.—Detroit News.

Bess Liked Peacock Pie

It is recorded by historians of the day that Queen Elizabeth's favorite dish on festive occasions was peacock pie.—Brooklyn Eagle.

protested that if they would allow him to telephone home, one of the Beechlands chauffeurs would be here in a short time with a runabout.

While he was telephoning, Mr. Schwenckton ordered Nettie to make some strong hot coffee and get out some doughnuts and pie.

But what, Meely wondered, would St. Croix think of the teacher's being asked to do this instead of the daughter of the house? She considered swiftly what would be her best course to avert suspicion on both sides. To get across the kitchen to the stairway and run up to her room? Mr. Schwenckton would be bound to stop her and insist that she stay and have coffee and doughnuts with them, and if he spoke to her at all, St. Croix would notice how differently he addressed her and Nettie. To remain here, however, was more certain to invite exposure. And yet, she was afraid to go away for fear of what might come out in her absence.

Nettie, as she bustled about making coffee and setting out cups and saucers, saw, with keen chagrin, how Mr. Creighton's eyes kept turning toward Meely and never in her direction. And the expression on his face—furtive, hungry, infatuated! Was this, Nettie wondered, a case of love on sight? She was greatly puzzled, for in her opinion Meely "looked a mess" in that sloppy kimono and with a "plait" down her back.

As Mr. Creighton hung up the receiver, there was a quick movement in the room—Meely making for the stairs.

"Ach, Meely—" began Mr. Schwenckton.

"Good night," she interrupted, rushing up the steps before he could stop her—but not before she caught in St. Croix' eyes the evidence of the conflict in his mind—a passionate protest against her going, mingled with a fear of her presence.

Upstairs in her own room, while she prepared for bed, she had the exciting suspense of wondering whether they were talking about her; whether St. Croix had noticed the kimono she had on, a Japanese embroidered silk thing that a county school teacher would hardly own if she were what she should be! Yes, this kimono could be a "give-away."

"Well, when this sort of thing could happen it was evident that she could not much longer keep up her farce. She must bring things to a climax as soon as possible; beguile St. Croix to lay his cards on the table; force his hand for a show-down.

The sound of the cabinet organ in the parlor below her bedroom, and Nettie's shrill voice singing, interrupted her thoughts. Nettie was invariably called upon by her father to entertain "company" with her musical accomplishments of organ and voice, and of course such distinguished company as Mr. St. Croix Creighton would have to be favored. Through Nettie's lungs and fingers the entire family found their one and only artistic expression.

CHAPTER V

At breakfast next morning Meely warily watched the faces around the table for signs of newly awakened suspicions of herself. But she found nothing unusual in the demeanor of the family.

Nettie chattered excitedly about the elegance and "swellness" of Mr. Creighton's stylish clothes, his wonderful white hands, the way he said his words—"He says 'hoff' for half! It sounds awful pretty and genteel that way! And, ach, the manners he's got! The way he held my chair for me to set! Say!"—It beggared words.

"But I always say," her father spoke in, "that I don't think so much of manners—manners is so much more important."

"Gimme manners!" Nettie defiantly affirmed her choice.

"Manners and manners," said Meely, "can go hand in hand—they're not mutually exclusive!"

Meely had often noticed that her use of a word of more than two syllables invariably awed the family into a prolonged silence.

She broke the present lull by broaching a subject to Mr. Schwenckton that was weighing on her mind. "How often do county superintendents visit a school, Mr. Schwenckton?"

"Ach, about once in so often."

"Yes, but how often?"

"Not so wery often. Now and then."

"But I mean," Meely patiently explained, "how far apart are 'now and then'?"

"Well, pretty far apart. You see, he's got too many to visit to come often. And the schools is spread over so much area that it takes up time to go to and from."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The KITCHEN CABINET

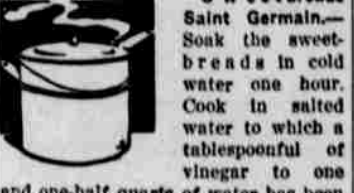
(©, 1924, Western Newspaper Union.)

"Lose the day loitering, 'twill be the same story Tomorrow, and the next more dilatory. For indecision brings its own delays, And days are lost lamenting o'er lost days."

"Are you in earnest? Seize this very minute! What you can do or think you can, begin it! Only engage, and then the mind grows heated; Begin it, and the work will be completed."

VARIOUS GOOD THINGS

When a dish of superior excellence is desired, here is a good one to try:



Sweet Breads.—Soak the sweet breads in cold water one hour. Cook in salted water to which a tablespoonful of vinegar to one and one-half quarts of water has been added. Simmer carefully for forty minutes. Drain and plunge at once into cold water so that they will be firm enough to handle. When cold remove the tubes and membrane, taking care not to break the sweetbreads.

Cut into slices about one-half inch thick. Brush over with melted butter and lay between thin slices of baked ham of the same size. Wrap each sandwich in letter paper brushed with olive oil, fasten with toothpicks and place in a hot oven until the paper is brown. The ham will cook just enough to give the sweetbreads a delicious flavor, but should not become dry. Arrange the meat on a platter and garnish with young green buttered peas and carrot balls, also buttered. Serve with:

Sauce Espagnole.—Cook one teaspoonful of onion in three tablespoonfuls of bacon fat until a golden brown, then add two tablespoonfuls of flour and two and one-half cupfuls of brown stock and one-fourth cupful of cider; cook until smooth, add five cloves, two sprigs of parsley and two teaspoonfuls of tomato puree and allow the sauce to simmer over very low heat until reduced to one pint. Strain, season with salt and pepper and reheat just before serving. To darken the sauce add a teaspoonful of sugar browned and add three tablespoonfuls of water. Use as much of the caramel as needed.

All humor, irritableness and a sour disposition are all cured by attention to the diet.

Economical Meat Dishes.

There are those who are fond of kidney. For them the following recipe is given:

Beef Kidney, Creole Style.—Trim the fat from a fresh kidney and cut into three-quarter inch slices. Dredge with four tablespoonfuls of flour. Chop one thick slice of bacon and two tablespoonfuls of suet, try out and add the kidney, four chopped onions, one sweet pepper chopped, one pint of tomatoes, one teaspoonful of salt, one-eighth teaspoonful of curry powder and a little cayenne. Cook and toss until the meat is well seared with the gravy before adding the tomatoes. Simmer three-quarters of an hour. Serve very hot on fingers of buttered toast.

Calves' Liver.—Fry until crisp one fourth pound of thinly sliced bacon, drain off all the fat several times while cooking. Remove to a hot platter. Pour hot water over a pound of liver, let stand five minutes, then drain and roll in equal parts of corn meal and flour with a teaspoonful of salt. Fry until well browned on both sides, using the fat from the bacon for frying. Just before serving pour over one-fourth of a cupful of coffee, cover tightly and let stand for a minute then serve garnished with the bacon.

Veal and Tripe Soup.—Chop finely two each of small green peppers, onions and beets. Melt a teaspoonful of fat in a saucepan; add the vegetables and stir over the heat. Add one-half pound of tripe cut into small cubes, one-fourth cupful of rice, two quarts of water and a two-pound knuckle of veal. Let simmer for three hours, add one tomato, salt, celery salt and pepper. Remove the bones, chop the meat and add to the soup.

Arabian Stew.—Sear six lean pork chops on both sides in a hot pan, then remove to a casserole. On each chop place one tablespoonful of rice, a slice of onion and a slice of tomato with two strips of green pepper. Add three teaspoonfuls of salt, three cupfuls of boiling water and bake for three hours in a moderate oven.

Melange of Rice.—Prepare by chopping fine, measuring after chopping, one cupful of cabbage, one-half cupful of carrots, one cupful of potatoes, one-half cupful of turnip, one-half cupful of onion and a few stalks of celery. Put these vegetables into a kettle with two quarts of boiling water and cook one hour. Add salt, pepper, cayenne and cook another half hour. Just before serving stir a cupful of milk into a cupful of warm cooked rice, add plenty of butter and add to the vegetables. Do not boil after the milk has been added.



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Nettie Maxwell